

AGENDA ITEM: Statewide Information Databases

GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:

CURRENT STATUS:

A. Librarians' Index to the Internet (LII)

The LII has been featured in the *Connection* newsletter published by the California State Library and on the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) website as Library Highlight for October (Exhibit A).

A meeting for indexers and the advisory board will take place during the California Library Association conference to allow indexers a chance to visit with each other and hear about the latest developments with the Librarians' Index. Training for new indexers will take place in January 2001. Fifteen libraries now co-brand with the LII.

Staff met with the California State Library legal counsel Paul Smith to explore copyright issues related to Library of California funding for the LII. He will discuss specifics related to the LII in his presentation to the Board.

Staff developed a digital logo to be used by the LII on their web site to indicate Library of California support for the project. Exhibit B displays the use of the logo. The graphic links to the Library of California web page (www.library.ca.gov/loc).

The advisory board will meet again in January 2001. Communication will continue in the interim via email and phone.

B. Regional trial database projects

The trial database projects funded by the Regional Library Network grants continue through June 30, 2001. Reports from each region for the past quarter were in progress at the time of this writing. Summary comments will be presented in person by staff. The LoC digital logo developed by staff will be distributed to each web site hosting connections to these LoC funded trials to improve attribution to the LoC for support of each project.

C. Arroyo Seco Cooperative Purchase Pilot

The Arroyo Seco Planning region steering committee for the full text cooperative licensing arrangement will meet on November 16th and 17th in Los Angeles. The committee will review the scope and activities of the grant with the consultant hired to execute the work plan of the project.

D. Statewide Information Database Licensing

As the regional library networks review their plans of service staff will be available to consult on options available for each region to support cooperative licensing arrangements. Statewide activities should be coordinated with regional efforts. The full text periodical licensing pilot in Arroyo Seco should provide further guidance on best practices at both the regional and state level. Staff are still working with two national regional library networks (BCR and AMIGOS) to provide options to LoC regional networks for cooperative licensing arrangements.

E. RAND California Trial Database Project

The survey of participants in the RAND California trial project has been completed. One hundred seventy nine surveys were returned from the four hundred and thirty eight registrants, a forty one percent return rate.

Exhibit C displays the significant data generated by the survey and includes comments from the participants on various aspects of the trial.

The survey respondents mirrored the level of participation by library type with the exception of the school libraries who had fewer survey respondents. Results may show some bias toward the public library experience since survey respondents included more of that type of library than reflected in the level of participation in the trial itself.

Chart 5 clearly indicates that most school and special libraries did not have any significant use of the database. This result indicates the difficulty of a single product addressing the needs of a variety of library types. Relatively low levels of use of the product may also be the result of the novelty of the service; established products are more familiar to libraries and therefore potential usefulness can be more accurately gauged.

Chart 6 displays the use of a variety of promotional efforts by library staff. Lack of time for training is listed most often (Table 2) as an impediment to the use of RAND.

Staff experience suggests that the evaluation process and the process of establishing eligibility for the trial project consumed more time than anticipated.

Frequent communication with the vendor representative was required to resolve eligibility issues. Future evaluations should be incorporated into trial projects as part of any proposal so that costs can be included in the budget process.

F. RAND California Cooperative Licensing

Information about cooperative licensing arrangements for the 2000–2001 fiscal year were disseminated through notification of the trial project survey. RAND itself has promoted libraries' participation in the cooperative licensing service. Approximately 36 libraries have subscribed through the LoC fiscal agent so far.

G. Library of California Periodicals/Serials Database

Reporting requirements for the Serials Service bureau have been streamlined so that less time is spent on these activities. Staff is working to insure that CLSA systems that produce union serials lists are coordinated with the work of the Serials Service bureau and the California Digital Library.

Relevant Committee: Support Services
Staff Liaison: Ira Bray



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Library Highlight for October 2000

By Librarians, For Everyone



According to a recent study in Nature magazine, there were 800 million Web pages on the Internet in February 1999. With more than 7 million pages being added each day, the researchers determined that search engines are able to index only 16 percent of the Internet.

Recognizing our increasing reliance on the Internet for information, the study called for making online information more accessible.

The [Librarians' Index to the Internet \(LII\)](#) is answering the call for better access to the Internet. Produced and organized by librarians, the index enables sensible searches and authoritative, reliable results. It covers thousands of topics, arranged alphabetically, and more than 7,000 Internet resources. The index has grown from the personal bookmark of a single librarian, to a directory with a corps of more than 90 volunteer librarian indexers. With no advertising or extensive promotion, the LII is quickly accumulating an impressive following among librarians and information gatherers across the country.

The Librarians' Index to the Internet is a part of the California State Library's [InFoPeople project](#), an initiative that has connected 46 percent of California's public libraries to the Internet and made them useful community access points through training and community involvement. From 1997 to 2000, the Librarians' Index to the Internet has received funding from California's share of the [Library Services and Technology Act](#) for a number of enhancements. With the grants the project enhanced the searching and display capabilities of the index, developed a training program for indexers, "co-branded" the service to interested California libraries, and is converting the records database to the popular MARC catalog standard.



Humble Beginnings

[Carole Leita](#) was a reference librarian with more than 20 years under her belt when she first began exploring the Internet. Although she was no techie, she lived with a computer scientist and knew about the Internet early on. She said, "I only began to pay attention and learn about how to use the Internet when I realized that large amount of useful information was all mixed in with junk and it needed selection and evaluation and indexing."

"At first, I was indexing--adding to my Gopher bookmark file--the useful Internet resources I found that I thought I would need for my own uses," she said. "It didn't take long for me to start organizing the entries by topic and not long after that for other librarians to discover that they could use my bookmarks if I made them available on the Internet. In 1993, her file had grown to 750 bookmarks and was migrated to the City of Berkeley's Web server, where it became known as the "Berkeley Public Library Index to the Internet."

Soon after that, the Berkeley Public Library became involved in the InFoPeople project, and Leita was appointed Internet Librarian to coordinate the project, administer the system, and train the staff and community volunteers. Her meeting with the InFoPeople manager for the University of California-Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE, Roy Tennant, prompted even greater exposure for her index. In March of 1997, Tennant arranged for her index to join the [Digital Library SunSITE](#), and the name was changed to the current "Librarians' Index to the Internet." The LII was first awarded LSTA funding in October 1997, which allowed Leita to recruit and train volunteer indexers throughout California.

The Volunteers

The strength of the Index stems from the skills of the volunteer indexers. There are about 95 volunteer librarians who identify, annotate, and index resources on the Web. They were initially recruited from the ranks of public librarians working on the InFoPeople project, but now include special, school, and academic librarians. According to Holly Hinman, the Project Coordinator for the InfoPeople Project, recruiting indexers is no problem. She said that California librarians are so excited about being indexers that there is always a waiting list.

After attending a full day of training with Leita, the indexers are expected to [index](#) a minimum of two sites a month. Many work in reference and locate useful sites as part of their daily work. Indexers can also draw from

a list of sites that users suggest for inclusion.

The indexers' job involves identifying a site, evaluating it, determining whether it is already in the directory, and filling out online input forms that describe the site and assign it subject headings. "Writing the annotation, really makes a difference with the index," says Hinman. Indexers are expected to write an annotation for each entry in one hundred words or less, and they are held to fairly high writing standards. The quality of the annotations is a source of pride for the project, and each annotation is reviewed by the editors and by Leita.

All but a few indexers work on their own time, usually after hours from home. The project staff estimates that at an average salary of \$20 an hour, the volunteer time is worth \$197,600 a year.

It is work the volunteers are willing to do. Dana Evans is the reference and documents librarian at the Sonoma County Library. In March of 1998, when she became involved in the InFoPeople project, she heard of the LII and "something about it resonated" with her. She says she uses many of her traditional library skills, investigating a Web site. Just as a librarian does not judge a book by the binding or by a beautiful cover, so must they look a bit past the presentation of a Web site. For each entry, she identifies the site's creator and qualifications, sometimes turning to the volumes of the library's reference section.

Making the Cut

The librarians are selective about what they include in the index. Sites are examined rigorously for the quality of their content, authority of source, ease of use and reliability. Indexers have a [checklist](#) of 19 questions, such as "What are the author's reputation and qualifications in the subject covered?" and "How frequently is the resource updated?"

The LII Web site states a basic selection tenet at the top of its criteria Web page: "The Librarians' Index to the Internet does not include sites that require a fee or are primarily advertising a product or service." One of the skills Leita picked up while developing the index was how to navigate through the increasing amount of advertising on the Internet. "Advertising isn't separate from the content as it generally is on TV," she said. "It is interspersed with the useful information content. A lot of time can be wasted if one doesn't learn to recognize what is advertising versus what is content."

With an increasingly commercial Internet, it is very important to the indexers and users that the LII remains commercial-free. Hinman described an episode in

which the LII looked into allowing commercial library vendors to take over the LII. The response from the indexers was clear. It would spell the end of the index since none of the librarians would continue to volunteer. The non-commercial nature of the index, according to Hinman, is a main reason why people are willing to volunteer their time.

How does it work?

There are 2,460 subject listings on the LII, with 40 major categories broken into additional subcategories. The subject authority file is based on the Library of Congress subject headings, but has been modified to reflect common usage, so that the LC's heading "electronic mail systems," for instance, becomes "e-mail." About 75 percent of the listings are specific resources; 15 percent are directories; and ten percent are databases. With the recent addition of a Digital Library SunSITE search engine, the site can now be searched as well as browsed.

The LII operates similarly to Yahoo and other commercial subject directories that provide sites by category. Yet, unlike Yahoo, the LII is annotated, non-commercial and selective. Users will have an impartial description of a Web resource, know that the resource is not pushing a product, and expect it to be useful. "The LII," said Laura Cohen, of the University of Albany Libraries, "is the thinking person's Yahoo."

A Virtual Library Reference Section

Based on [comments](#) received by the LII project, librarians who have discovered the site are thrilled with it. It seems to be a made-to-order fix for many of their Internet searching needs, saving them time and effort in their reference work. Many report that they make the site the homepage for their computers. Others describe how they use the directory in their Internet classes, especially to illustrate the difference between searching commercial search engines and selective subject indexes. Several comments from librarians are posted on the site:

"I love the Index because it gathers relevant sites together into one organized place. If a patron has used a search engine and has not been able to find relevant sites, I recommend that they use the Index because then they will be able to find relevant sites. One patron was searching for information about alternative therapies for cancer. A search engine brought up sites that would sell her various products, but no site that had the information she wanted. I showed her how to use your site and she was pleasantly surprised to see how easy it was to use. Thank you for a wonderful site!" --*Brenna*

Ring, Librarian I, San Diego County Library - El Cajon Branch

“The site is critical for two reasons. The first is that it is an excellent resource. It is easy to use, well maintained, and contains the "right stuff" for the audiences that I target (public and school librarians and teachers). The second reason is that I know from experience that most librarians do not have the time, the ability, or the inclination to develop a resource such as this. It is important for librarians to have access to sites such as the Librarians' Index to the Internet so that they do not waste their time searching for good sites. They can go straight to the resources there and use them, or refer users to them. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, it is already up and rolling.” -- *Linda Woods Hyman, Pacific Bell Education First, Dept. of Educational Technology, San Diego State University*

“I require all staff who work at the Reference Desk to look at LII every week. Every librarian loves it and uses it daily to answer reference questions. Recently, a library technician was assisting at the Reference Desk and I introduced her to the site and had her go through the “New this Week” pages. She wrote me a note telling me about all of the sites she was most excited about, and it was almost every single one!! Between Google [an extensive search engine] and LII, we've been able to throw away most of the pamphlets in our vertical files and most of the cards in our fugitive file. Hurray for the best site on the Internet.”-- *Ellen A. Riley, Branch Librarian at the Poway Branch of San Diego County Library*

What's Ahead

The InFoPeople Project hopes that more people will discover the Librarian's Index to the Internet. Toward that goal, the project, which can already be found from 9,316 Web sites worldwide and receives over a million hits per month, has developed a [“co-branding” initiative](#). Any library in California can host the LII on their own site, while maintaining their own logo, background and graphic colors, and main links. Fourteen libraries, including the California State Library, are currently participating in the co-branding program.

The LII also sends out a free weekly [e-mail newsletter](#) listing the best twenty resources added to the index that week. We currently have more than 7,500 subscribers in 80 countries. Leita guesses that the vast majority are librarians who use it as a current awareness resource.

With so much information available at the stroke of a

computer keyboard, it may seem that librarians belong to a bygone era. Not so says Leita: “I believe librarians are positioned to use skills already learned in understanding how knowledge is organized, how databases work, and how to impart that knowledge to others. What I see over and over is that people without these skills take much more time getting to the correct answers to their information needs, if they ever find them—than librarians who are already skilled in evaluating sources and retrieving information.”

Vital Statistics:

Grant:	LSTA Subgrants from the California State Library each year from 1997 to 2000
Web site:	www.lli.org
Total Annual Budget:	\$215,000
Project Staff:	LII Manager, full time 2 editors, 20 hrs/week each Programmer, 10 hrs/week Indexer trainer and support, ad hoc
Activity:	More than a million hits a month
Content:	More than 7,000 web resources 75% specific Web sites 15% directories 10% databases
Linked to By:	9,316 Web sites worldwide

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Maintained by Carole Leita: leita@lii.org on the [Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE](#)

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EXHIBIT C

RAND California Extent of Use N = 178

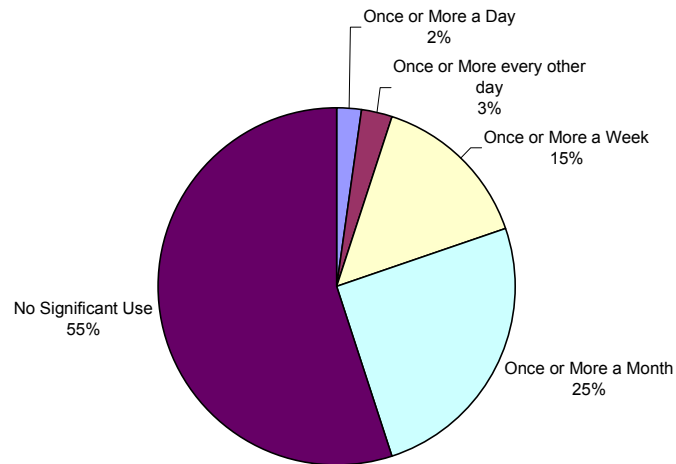


Chart 1

Subscribe to RAND Next Year? N = 179

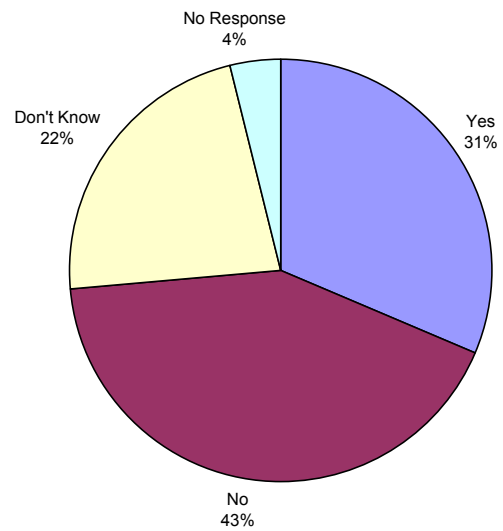


Chart 2

Registrants by Library Type

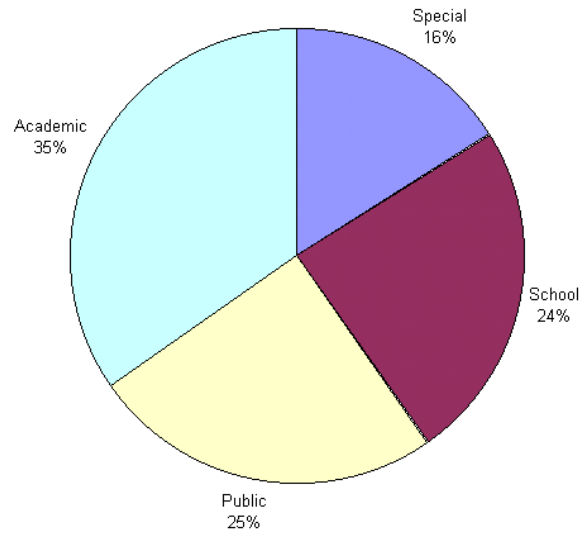


Chart 3

Survey Respondents

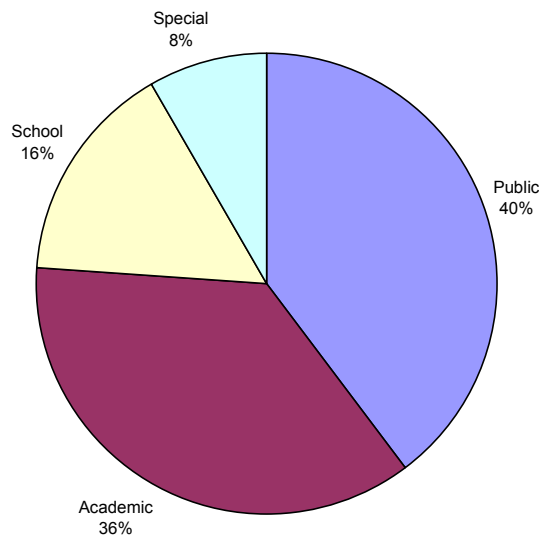


Chart 4

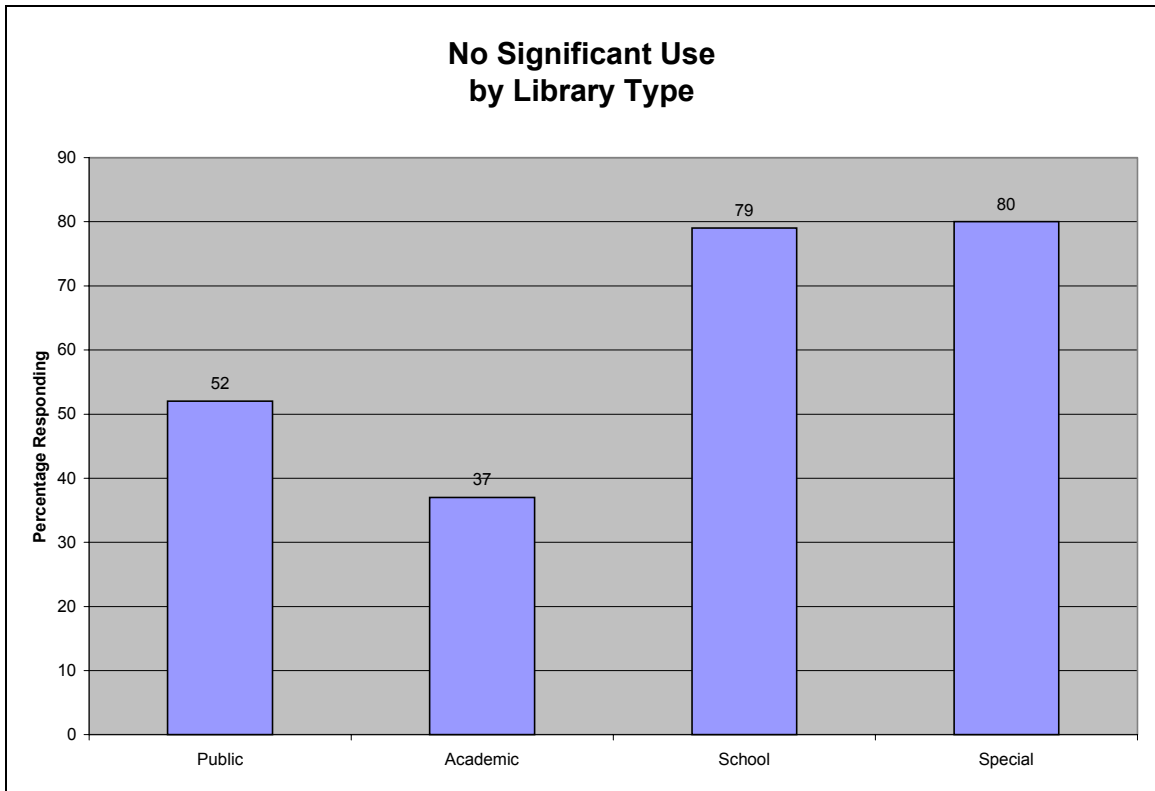


Chart 5

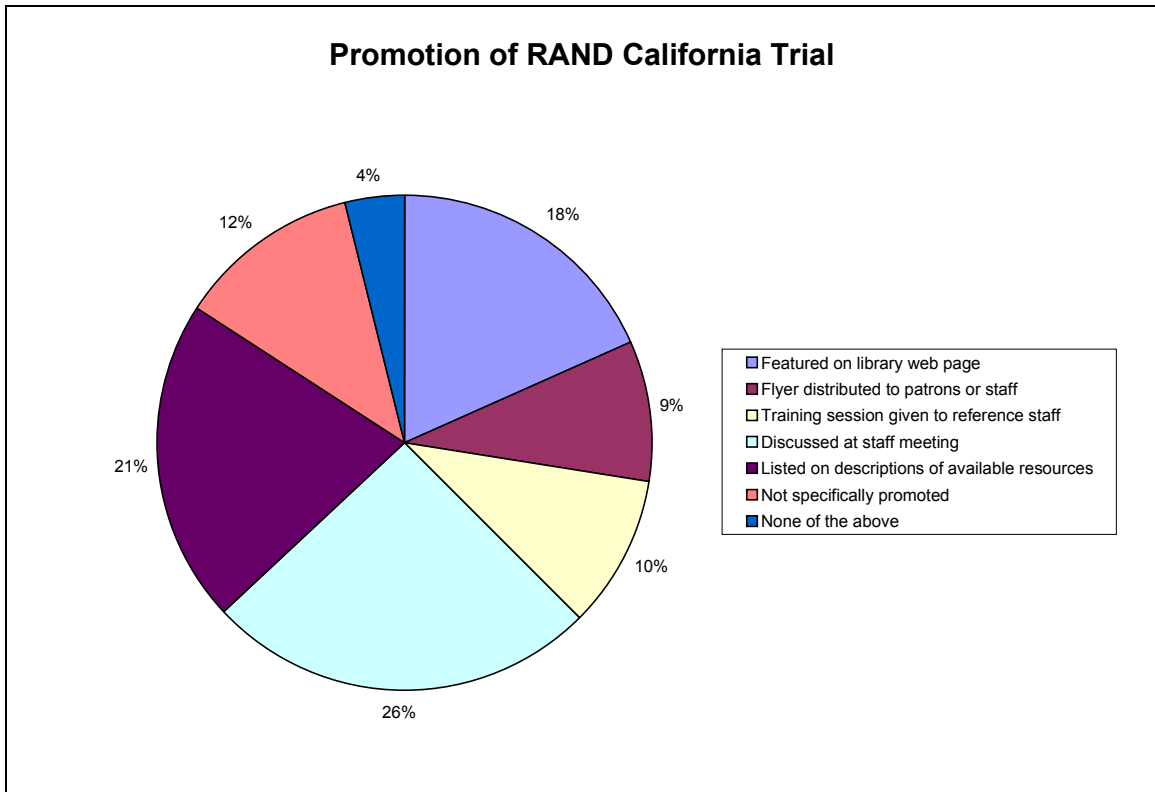


Chart 6

Ease of Use

	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Interface easy to use for first time user?	103	40	23	13
Any crucial features missing from the interface?	15	63	79	22
Is the online documentation or help adequate?	77	22	64	16
Did RAND provide help to you directly?	22	118	26	13

Table 1

Impediments to Use of RAND California

Inadequate time for training on RAND	71
Communication with staff on use of RAND	44
Inadequate or underqualified staffing	42
Lack of access to computer workstations	12
Connection to RAND too slow	10
Inadequate hardware/software capabilities	7
Connection to Internet unavailable	5
Connection to RAND unavailable	5

Table 2

Feedback from Patrons/Users

The ability to graph got the highest praise.

Patrons were glad to have easy access to this information.

Excellent information but Yorba Linda has more small home-based businesses than large businesses so usage is minimal. Students use the information for their reports.

The database has limited appeal, mostly for people needing to gather information as they write grants

The database is included in a list of self-help Library databases and most student users access it on their own. Therefore, most reference librarians only heard from such students when they were having difficulties.

We normally use the database for population statistics - all users to my knowledge have been satisfied with the data retrieved.

The data base was not relevant for most of our client needs.

I only heard from one patron who had problems accessing the database from off campus through our proxy server.

The database was used rarely

The interface is not the easiest to use. You have to be fairly intuitive in order to find your information.

Hard to navigate, difficult to figure out how to get the figures they want.

We actually asked teachers to review the site. They expressed an inability to see where it (in the current form) applied to their teaching and their curriculum. After the initial exposure, very few tried it again. I guess that we would have to reintroduce the site and review any updates. Our initial use all took place in the first months of this school year.

Great source of "official" statistics for California

CA statistics do not seem to be of major interest.

-Most reference librarians who initiated use found it difficult to explain well enough to leave students on their own

-Some reference librarians who had studied accessing the database in depth found it very useful, and potentially even more useful.

We have not received any patron feedback.

No staff or customers ever expressed a need to use this product.

easy to use; statistics re census and education very helpful

Used by library staff

We were unable to log on to the database in spite of technical assistance from RAND. The problem may have been because of our previous ISP. We now have DSL and a more professional ISP in <FastnetIT.com>.

I do wish we could give it another try because I believe that there is excellent demographic and statistical information available to Nonprofit Support Management offices such as the CMAP partnership.

Other than being on our web site we did not openly advertise this site. Therefore, I have no feedback from patrons.

The information and statistics one is able to access from this site is extremely helpful! I often was asked by the Library Administration to gather specific data. Rand helped me do this.

Did not have time to use data base for any significant searches

Very appreciative that it was available. Would like to have remote access from home.

Reference staff gave me the feedback that it was not useful to them-did not answer the type of questions that we get.

We also did an evaluation of public use of all our databases- and the use of Rand was lowest of all. Based on this, we are not interested in subscribing, and probably would not want to continue even if it was paid for by a third party.

We were never able to establish a reliable connection to Rand database. We

tried a few different methods of access (by IP range, using username/password, fixed IP addresses) but gave up after numerous tries. The tech support from Rand was problematic; emails/calls for support were not consistently returned.

up-to-date

Excellent source for statistics not easily available elsewhere.

We had a pre-existing subscription to RAND, mostly for current population data for grant applications, and related administrative uses. I have shared RAND with some employees, but we have not yet moved it out into the public realm. I have done searches on behalf of patrons.

The District researcher discovered the site AFTER the trial was over but she loved it and recommended to others including the Grant Writer.

Students in speech classes used the database for persuasive speeches. They thought it was o.k.

I used it several times and found errors. There was no obvious way to report them.

We have had limited demand for California statistics. Users that I have had contact with have been very happy to find this resource available. They have been very satisfied with the information they have retrieved.

Hard to use. Used it initially but didn't find what was wanted. Kept getting kicked off. One reason it has not been available to patrons is that we are just now networking out branches onto the county WAN. Before that their internet connections were unreliable and there was no good way to set up the database except by bookmarking it and some libraries have security on their machines that prevents bookmarking.

Users find the database easy to use and the information excellent. They look forward to additional statistical information in the future.

They would appreciate more ready-made statistical charts. Many of our users are not especially sophisticated technologically. They get frustrated by the form pages for making charts. Even after being shown the basic functionality, the fact that many times the data requested is "Not Available" bothers users.

That it is a good resource

We didn't get a lot of usage. I know that I have personally purchased your Rand reports and I use them a great deal in the philosophy class that I teach.

I suggested several titles for students and they were able to get a great deal of valuable information from them.

The reputation of Rand for the quality of the statistics gives it very high marks.

We don't use it as often as we anticipate using the database in the future with more hands on by the librarians with the students.

Very helpful for the subjects it covers.

Some of what is here is available in other "free" sources

Patrons that used the resource were impressed with the amount of information that could be accessed. Most users needed help complying the information tables.

I used it several times; it was very attractively formatted information. Our hospital occasionally needs the type of demographic information it has for financial decisions.

It is difficult to use.

We really never had an occasion to use it.

They were impressed with the catagories/types of information and the ready availability of the statistics.

Students find it easy to use and a valuable resource, especially the ability to export data into a spreadsheet for additional manipulation.

Staff found it easy to use and a great resource for hard to find information.

Great resource of statistics for California.

Choosing parameters for the final tables is complicated.

I unfortunately did not have the time to explore your resource and therefore was unable to train the teachers. This year I want to avail myself of this resource.

not much from users. some commented that the interface makes it easier to find information than by using other resources which supply the same type of data.

We didn't get much feedback, but those that we heard from were very positive about the database and its content.

All positive. The ease of use and the "one-stop shopping" capability, promoted its use by staff, particularly reference providers at the public service desk. One branch library in our system even had an instructor designed an entire school assignment around its use.

Users appreciated access to various types of statistics presented in the database. Paper format of the statistics are at least a year behind and the currency of the statistics was appreciated. Also accessing the statistics in one search engine was extremely helpful.

hard to get at specific localities, i.e. We would like to have a blank space and put in Whittier and get all info. on that.

No feedback from the public. However the staff didn't find much use for the source.

Very good source of California demographic information.

This is a great source for the questions that it will answer.

Presently our district is upgrading the Novell Client network and installing a new student records data-base system called "Aries", which should be completely functional by Sept. 1, 2000. The updating of our system software was a major factor that has been resolved which will give us the full flexibility of being able to implement and use the Rand program to its full potential.

very user-friendly

Like any free offer, during the trial period we had very few people ask questions that could be answered by RAND. Once the Trial period ended there were about 5 occasions during one week that I could have used the resource in this database.

Use was minimal, so there was no feedback.

Some of our Branch Librarians found it useful. We were in a transition phase last year, and some of the rest of our Librarians did not have enough

experience to fully utilize this database.

-- Had a demonstration only.

none, except that the branches that had access did not use it.

Not specific to clientele of the library. Used a few times, but not extensively.

It is just not information needed by elementary students nor their teachers.

The feedback from our Public Programs and Marketing departments was quite positive.

Our students did not find the kind of information they needed for school projects in this database.

The Reference Librarians liked what they saw in the Rand database, but indicate to me that they didn't often find a match at the Reference Desk for students who needed the info in the database. Reference librarians learned how to use the database without formal training.

Nothing significant

They didn't use it.

Patrons were please with results but the database was searched by staff for patrons. People got what they wanted. It didn't answer questions that it couldn't answer.

Due to time constraints, we were unable to use this resource or direct others to it.

students have always been pleased with their results

Great resource but was not needed by our primary users.

The reference librarians who used this source found it very helpful. I found it had provided statistiscs for California that patrons may ask for.

A faculty member submitted the following comments: I use the Rand database regularly (at least once or twice a month) and I strongly support the renewal of the UC subscription. At least two of my [department] community, economics, and government finance. This is a very valuable data source for those of us

who work on California topics, especially because of its comprehensive reach and ease of use. However, it has some limitations in the presentation of community-level data which could be improved with some technological work --particularly the current inability to aggregate information for groups of cities/counties.

Expensive if we had to pay - Duplicates free stuff we can get elsewhere - Easy to navigate - Great collection of publications - Nice tables of data

Reference librarians at San Jose felt they "could never find anything" on the California Rand database. Unfortunately, the Rand database was billed as a statistical database, and librarians tended to use it only for the most difficult reference questions. (Reference staff has already developed a working knowledge of California government websites.

Not relevant to our information needs.

Comments about the usefulness of the data. We and they especially like being able to tailor a search to specific cities, counties, etc. Several people have thanked us for having it as one of our databases.

Early comments (last year) focused on how difficult the database was to use. Comments were favorable later in the year.

Nothing relevant in database for the law-related questions that we get

Those who used it found it very useful

Did not help our quality management group. They needed info with regard to veterans and healthcare.

It had lots of useful statistical information.

Have only begun to use it - have just advertised it school-wide. Had a class in here yesterday - used it for stats on CA homicides.

This proved not useful for students even though there is a lot of info available on it.

Just didn't meet the needs of our students.

Great, specific data. Students sometimes get confused as all buttons/charts are not visible at once. Scrolling over to see current data is awkward.

We were very disappointed with this product at first, we used it every time it seemed appropriate. After a month of use and NO benefits, we pretty much gave up on it.

Good information, in depth

Very positive -- easy to use and intuitive -- extremely thorough.

I like it especially for grant info - should have been used more.

Very positive. To date, this has been available only to staff, who have conducted search for patrons. Next week, it will be available on all 4 of our public access workstations.

Staff had no training in this resource and without familiarity they never consulted it.

One counselor found the stats wonderful ...excellent for her research purposes. (This was during a library orientation for faculty on new library resources).

Statistics were general, free elsewhere

Feedback was not positive. Data appeared to be rather old and not organized to use easily.

Generally good comments about content & the price

Good resource but we had little use for info within the RAND scope of coverage.

Most of the problems we have with RAND California are technical issues related to its design. The California Statistics area is particularly difficult to use. In order to get to information, the user has to select from seemingly endless menu boxes in order to compile a report. If the site utilized more html or pdf pages (or even Word files) it would make it easier and quicker to access desired information. The demographic Reports and Research Papers on the free California Department of Finance web site at www.dof.ca.gov are quicker and easier to view than similar information on the RAND site. Similarly, some of the economic and census information on RAND can be obtained more easily from the U.S. government sites. I'm sure there is information unique to RAND that makes it attractive to serious researchers who regularly follow the content and issues it covers, but the interface discourages use by the general search looking for a first stop source for California demographic and economic

data.

Not user friendly

Users like the statistics, although they are not always aware of what is available through RAND California

Quality of Quantity of info is good - hard to tell what might be in the database

No feedback - not considered useful in settings

Happy to have direct access to CA statistics

Very helpful, didn't seem to catch on to users

Alternative Resources to RAND

California Statistical Abstract

Our needs tend to lean toward taxonomic data bases

Some statistics are available through STAT-USA

For patrons really on the go, I use the Calif. Statistical Abstract

Direct search on Google

Statistics on the Web

California Statistical Abstract - print

We actually use almanacs and printed materials

Statistical Abstract of the US for certain demographics

No, not for up to date information

None that I know of.

California Cities, Towns, and Counties

Either the California Almanac, California Cities,

We have used documents from Ca Dept of Finance

We only need this type of information infrequently

Probably not unless available from State of CA

California Statistical Abstract

Not really.

No, there just wasn't need for statistical information

Our need is in education and the Calif. Dept. of Education

www.ca.gov

Demographic Unit, Dept. of Finance.

California Dept of Finance, EDD, Census

The federal databases for higher education; US Statistical Abstracts

Most find it easier to use WWW sites

Some information is available on the State of California web site

California Almanac

Los Angeles Times online

Only print sources

I would use the Department of Finance web site

Statistical Abstract

Statistical abstract, state and county information

yes, by going to specific state statistical databases

No. No other site brings together such a cross-di

Not really.

We use Internet sites such as State of California

various state government web sites

Without training I could not really use the site,

Sales and Marketing Management Annual Survey

California-Dept. of Finance

No, not to my knowledge.

California Statistical Abstract.

Various sites are bookmarked on the reference desk

California Dept. of Finance

www.easidemographics."

Books: CA Dept of Finance, California Statistical

None

State of california dept. of finance

Statistical Abstracts of the United States

IGS Statewide Database

California Government

No. This source has excellent information.

California Cities, Towns Counties

Print resources.

California Statistical Abstract online

No, it seems to be the best of what there is.

We currently gain statistical information from printed and online governmental sources. (We are a federal and state depository, and a great deal of current statistical data is available online).

Stats - USA - forthcoming: UC Consortia's California Counts database

Yes, we use a variety of statistical websites as well as print reference sources for California statistics.

California Department of Finance www.dof.ca.gov

All kinds of data in this resource - have not yet come across anything else so

comprehensive

Not needed.

No, almanacs are too general. Specific, local information/statistics are very valuable.

California Statistical Abstract, but lacks depth, commentary

CA depts.

Not really, given that RAND now has current year estimates.

Print issues of the 1990 Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., and CQ's State Fact Finder. Online site: Institute of Governmental Studies (UC Berkeley)

Books, statistical abstracts

go to specific agencies ca.gov

We have little need for this particular information

State of California Website

Yes, in some subject areas.

statistical books

Don't know of any

CA Dept of Education, U.S. government sources, Time Almanac, and the like

State Finance Office, census.gov

California statistical abstracts (online), County & City Data Book (online), Statistical Abstract of the U.S. (online)

Function/Content/Coverage/Value to the Library

"Overall, we think that Rand California is a very good system. It's easy to use and provides data down to local levels when available. It could be improved in some minor ways. For example, we would like to see more detail in the citations to the source of the data. Only an agency name is usually given as the source. Does the data relate back to published data (printed, or online, available as mrdp from the source) or to unpublished data? We would also like to see link to the Online Statistics Summary displayed in a more prominent fashion, again with more detail on the source notes, e.g. are the 1990 Census data from STF1? Some other source? A librarian who had tried to output the data as graphs noted: ""The errors for graphing are not clear. My best guess is that the system can graph for a single subject, e.g. farm employment or non-farm employment, but not both side-by-side. This is ok, but the error messages don't express these limitations clearly."" We would like to see the RAND database continue to maintain historical backfiles of information, since this data frequently disappears from agency web sites. We appreciate the convenience of data use on the RAND site, and the ease of access to county and city-level data, and the availability to display only selected data for selected counties or cities."

Important resource, but not sure of duplication with free stuff elsewhere.

My feeling is that the Rand database would be extremely useful to students. It combines info from a large number of sources into one user-friendly interface.

We just don't use this kind of information.

Interface needs more graphics. (like a SEARCH button, for example, on the Statistics page.) The statistics database (which is what we use almost exclusively) suffers GREATLY from lack of subject indexing. Keyword searches often just don't cut it in this database. For example, when I look for "drug abuse," "drug arrest," or "drugs," I get 0 hits. But if I look for "drug," I turn up a table whose title is "Drug and Alcohol Abuse." (And why didn't a keyword search for the words "drug" and "abuse" pull that one??) (More at bottom of survey)

Content and coverage are good. The interface is pretty difficult for novice users. Could use more professional graphics/layout to make getting to databases more obvious.

The data is a great resource to have access to. Unfortunately, our patrons did

not use RAND very often because there is not a great need for statistical data here at Shasta College. RAND is valuable as a secondary, not primary, resource.

It's been a while, but my impression was it wasn't going to answer our needs.

We haven't used RAND California very much. RAND provides a lot of good statistics, but most of our students want national statistics.

It is a valuable tool. We want to keep it even if we have to pay for it.

Great content, easy to use. Nice to have so much statistical information in one place.

It's very comprehensive and a little tricky for first time students users. Seems pretty easy to "pick up" though

Our library votes "no" on renewing this. The Gale Choice will be much more popular here."

Didn't provide any needed information that couldn't have been gotten from other sources - print or electronic

Good source of concrete data about our state!

The database was used once or twice by our district superintendent to look at population demographics.

We gave up on it. A variety of other sources (i.e. general Internet search "American salaries & wages survey", etc.) did a better job for us."

Content is good. Our students should be using RAND more than they do. Many do not realize that it isn't just another Web site.

A source to take students beyond books, periodicals - which do not have detail on uniquely California aspects of a topic i.e. education, immigration. Most users would do simple keyword search and not delve deeper.

This is a very valuable and much used resource for our library. The students do not find it difficult to use. We have it bookmarked on all the internet terminals.

Good value, but not promoted enough

Excellent on all counts. We've had very positive responses from patrons from whom we have retrieved info. Some city staff have been particularly impressed.

Content of information and coverage is very good. We show students/faculty requesting CA statistics the RAND database, and feature it when appropriate in our orientations (which are very class/subject specific).

Was not useful for questions received during trial period

Concerns

A serious impediment to a campus renewal of the RAND license involves the terms of the licensing contract. The license we saw last year has one very objectionable paragraph in it that would not permit UCD to sign the license without deletion. It stated that the Library assumes liability for use by its patrons. According to ira Bray, this provision has been removed and may no longer be an issue.

Mainly cost

We do not need this info.

In addition to the difficulties presented by the interface, we have been further frustrated by the slow server. It is slow to respond to an initial contact, and also slow to compile requested reports.

We have already renewed for next year. There are many free web-based sources of statistics on California, and we haven't really used the RAND database enough yet to have a sense of what duplication and overlap there might be. If the RAND search engine actually worked for keyword

Would not consider using again

We have not used RAND enough to justify paying for it.

Pretty sure I'll do it again.

Information found here - and there was a lot - was not really what our patrons ask for, so it was only used minimally here.

Not a good use of money.

See above - depends on assessment of other libraries in the system.

We have already subscribed.

If the pricing stays as it is for this fiscal year, we should be able to afford it again even if MOBAC does not purchase for us.

If this is offered again please have some regional training sessions.

Concerned about the cost increases every year ... but currently RAND is very reasonable. We did continue our subscription through CCCL [Community College League of California].

Don't have enough funds

Not interested in this database. Thank you for the opportunity to preview it for one year.

Availability of training for staff; cost for license

Better documentation and user guides for the librarians. Also, a quick tips form that we could give to patrons

The price; availability to our distance education students.

I need to promote and inform students better – more

Doesn't meet K-12 student reference needs

Additional Comments

If we subscribe, we would appreciate receiving data on statistics of use. We did receive data on the first ten months, which showed a surprisingly high number of accesses. We would appreciate more detailed data if available.

Personally, I found this database to be outstanding source of statistical info, especially in graphics form, for students. The times I used it, especially with the color printer, high school and college students were just overwhelmed with the results.

It's basically "over the head" of our students. Also, there is not a separate study of California in grades 10-11-12 (this is a 3-year high school), which translates to no demand for an in-depth database for California only. It would be a great resource in a college or university, or in a public library with a high demand for economics information.

Better for an academic library.

We need use statistics from you! That's what helps us justify the costs of databases. Though the content is great, it's often very difficult to find the statistics we're looking for because there's no subject authority to search and keyword searching doesn't seem to work much of the time. If you just happen to hit the right word, everything's great. There should be a "New Search" button at the top or side of every screen, especially on your search

We did appreciate the opportunity to try the database free of charge. Thank you!

The "pace hit" statistics show that people at Sierra are going to RAND California. Few librarians have helped students with it so I'm not sure how many people are actually using it.

License expired, unable to use for about a week

Could use a little more direction to users regarding search techniques/Boolean/phrase

This is the second time we've been asked to provide input on this database since the trial

This is the second time I have filled this out.

Good job! I tried twice to complete this survey online but the responses I typed in were never able to be sent! Was your network down?

Just fyi, I tried to do this survey on-line but each time I tried to submit responses, the response would not go through.

Had unique information not readily available elsewhere.

Promote to county/city administrative staff

Sorry this comes to you so late. The librarians were all gone until the end of August, and this was buried under a ton of e-mail.

Staff changeover occurred as it came in, and it did not get sufficient attention.

Thank you for the offer of this service

We would look at sites and go directly to sites.

Lack of user documentation hindered librarians from using databases to fullest.

We did not promote it last year because we thought we would have it for only one year and then it would be gone.

Very helpful that you have remote patron authentication capabilities.

It is a valuable addition to our reference services.